A Chance
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A Chance

by chokememrstark

Summary

When Tony meets the kid for the first time, it's under very unfortunate circumstances and he doesn't think he will ever see him again. That is, until about a year later the very same boy comes to his tower, surprising him more than he expected.

Notes

Due to multiple people asking, there will probably be a second part to this in the future, so stay tuned!

The first time Tony met the boy, it was at gunpoint. He walked home, minding his own business and suddenly heard a demanding voice behind him and felt the cold metal press against his skull.

"Your money, *now*!"

Being robbed or mugged wasn't really something Tony was used to - and if anyone dared, he usually made sure to keep his money and a few teeth from the one trying shit with him, but for some reason, he didn't this time. Instead he reached into his pocket and pulled his wallet out, handing it over.

"Just take it, but don't shoot," he said calmly, his hands still up.

The wallet was taken almost frantically and after a few seconds he heard a quiet 'Oh shit' -

obviously when whoever robbed him opened it to check how much money he got. Tony couldn't help the smirk and when he was handed his wallet back - which was surprising enough - he felt the gun to his head lower. But, instead of leaving, the one who just robbed him just stood there, so long that Tony eventually turned around to look at him. And when his eyes fell on the boy that stood behind him, nearly sobbing over the bundle of money in his hand, Tony felt something in his chest tighten.

"You okay, kid?" he asked, not quite sure what to do otherwise.

The boy who robbed him was a child, nothing else fit. Thirteen, maybe fourteen, Tony knew the kind usually. They were runaways, drug addicts, looking fucked up beyond anything. But this one was different. The kid looked like he couldn't harm a fly and for a moment, Tony wondered if the gun was actually real or not, but that didn't matter right now, did it? No, the kid was close to tears and somehow that got to him.

"Hey, it's fine," he said with a smile. "You can have it, it's all good. I have more where that came from."

At this, the boy finally looked up and Tony's breath hitched for a moment. He looked into the saddest and most innocent doe eyes imaginable, tears in the corners that were ready to fall any second. Tony feared the boy would actually burst into tears any moment and he didn't want that.

"Come on, I really don't mind," he said quickly, for whatever reason patting the boy's shoulder. "You need it more than I do, kid. Just… try to find a way to do it without that thing." He nodded towards the gun in the boy's hand, cracking a weak smirk. "Not good if you meet the wrong guy, you know?"

The kid looked at him for a moment longer and Tony almost thought he saw relief in his eyes, before he turned around and ran as fast as he could. Tony didn't see him again for quite some time.

The next time he crossed the boy's eyes it was nowhere other than his own home - or rather, at the Stark Tower, which really made no difference in the end. He just came back from his nightly patrol through the area when he got the message from Jarvis.

"Sir, you have a visitor waiting for you."

Toy blinked confused as he got out of his suit. A visitor? It was past ten, who the hell would be visiting now apart from Pepper and Pepper never needed his permission to enter?

"Who is it?" Tony asked as he walked across the landing platform slowly.

"A young man named Parker, sir. I told him you were out, but he insisted to wait for your return."

Parker? Tony never heard that name before. What on earth could some random guy want from him at this time of the day?

"Did he say why he insists on seeing me?" he asked curious, but Jarvis was not much of a help.

"I'm sorry, sir. He simply insisted that meeting you is essential and made it clear that he is willing to wait."

"Fuck," Tony growled as he stepped into the penthouse and immediately got himself a drink. Situations like this never turned out good, he had enough experience to know that. "Where is he?" he finally asked, putting the glass to his lips.

“In the elevator, sir,” Jarvis informed him nonchalantly. “He’s been there for an hour now.”

Great, a stalker! Could this day turn any better?

“God, let him in. I’ll listen to what he wants and then throw him out again,” Tony growled and emptied his glass in one go without even realizing it. “Ten in the fucking evening, as if there’s not a better time, Jesus Christ…”

Tony expected the worst, literally, but what he didn’t expect was the young man that stepped out. He was actually frozen for a moment because he recognized that face. It’s been almost a year, but he wouldn’t forget it, never. There wasn’t even a single question in his mind when he walked towards the boy and pulled him into his arms. Why? He had no idea, but it felt like the right thing to do. When he let go, the kid looked even more scared than before when he stepped into the penthouse and Tony felt his heart ache.

“I expected to see anyone but not you,” he said a bit awkwardly, flashing the kid a smile. It took a long moment before the other even looked up and when he did, he had a similar sad look on his face as the first time.

“I hope I don’t bother you, sir,” he said quietly and wrung his hands. “I just… came to thank you.”

“For what?” Tony asked, sending a wave of confusion over the boy’s face.

“You… you remember me, right?” he asked carefully, almost as if he had walked into the wrong billionaire’s tower on accident.

“Sure do,” Tony said with a smile. “I told you to be more careful with your toy, didn’t I?”

The kid blushed and bowed his head, but eventually nodded. “I… I was…” he admitted quietly. “I thought I was dreaming but… I wasn’t. You helped me a lot, sir.”

Tony’s smile softened and he stepped up to the boy, wrapping an arm around his shoulder. “Tell me about it,” he said in his most friendly tone, his confusion and anger barely there anymore now. He led the boy over to the couch to sit him down before getting them both something to drink - a whiskey for himself and a coke for the kid. “What happened after you made my wallet a bit lighter?”

The boy blushed even harder at this, refusing to look up. “I never wanted to do that, really,” he started ashamed, turning the can of coke in his hands nervously. “I just… didn’t know what else to do. I was hungry and cold, no one wanted to help me… and then I met you.”

Tony’s chest tightened once more. This poor kid. Luckily he did meet him and not some psycho. How much worse could things have turned in that case?

“Were you able to use the money you got from me?” Tony asked and the kid nodded.

“I… I got a room for a week, at a cheap pension. Still expensive, but I could sleep and shower and… eat.” He swallowed hard at the last word, as if eating wasn’t on his daily schedule during that time.

“Got no family?” Tony asked carefully and the boy shook his head slowly. “Yeah, me neither,” Tony sighed. “Sucks making it on your own.”

“Yeah,” the boy said and sighed. “I had like… nine hundred bucks from you left? I tried to get as far as possible with it. And then… I got my scholarship.”

“Scholarship?” Tony asked curious, raising a brow. For the first time, the kid’s face lit up and he turned his head.

“MIT,” he said, not without a hint of pride in his voice. “Full scholarship, no additional payments apart from living.”

“Shit,” Tony hissed and his eyes widened. That was something! “You got enough for that?”

“No,” the boy smiled sadly and then let out a disappointed laugh. “But that’s not why I’m here, not at all. I wanted to thank you… for giving me some hope back. I would’ve never gotten this scholarship without you and even if I can’t accept it, it’s nice to know I’m not all worthless.”

“The hell you won’t accept it!” Tony said strictly, a serious expression on his face. The kid looked up confused and slightly intimidated. “You got a scholarship for MIT? You’re fucking going there! They don’t give out these things to nobodies, if you don’t go you’ll never forgive yourself!”

“I’d love to, but as I said, I can’t pay for a room on campus or any other and it’s… a bit shitty to live on the street while going to college, you know?” The boy shrugged as if it was nothing, but for Tony it surely wasn’t.

“Jarvis, get someone to prepare the guest room,” Tony said sharply and then eyes the kid for a moment. “And fill the wardrobe. Size M, anything that screams ‘I’m gonna fuck the MIT up’.”

“Of course, Sir,” Jarvis replied, a disembodied voice that obviously startled the kid.

“What are you doing?” he asked shocked, staring at Tony as if he had lost his mind.

“You got a scholarship for the MIT and no place to stay?” Tony asked and the kid nodded slowly. “Well, congrats. You just found one. No additional costs, unless you touch my stuff. I won’t let you waste such an opportunity just because you don’t know where to live.”

“But… you don’t know me.” The kid looked at him with wide eyes, unable to process what was happening right now. “I… I *robbed* you!”

“Kid, I’m Iron Man,” Tony said and gave the boy an amused smirk. “I could have stopped you within seconds. And I’m not gonna let some bad luck destroy the future of someone who deserves so much better.”

There was a long moment of silence before the boy threw himself at Tony and hugged him tightly, sobbing against his chest. All Tony could make out were the words ‘Thank you’ and ‘I don’t deserve this’, but it was enough for him to pat the kid’s back and smile warmly.

“You deserve this chance and so much more,” Tony assured him and rubbed his hand over the kid’s back. “Just don’t waste it, okay? You obviously got the brains, now show me that I’m not being a dumb fool for believing you can use that potential.”

“I won’t, I promise I won’t!” the boy sobbed and somehow, that made Tony feel a bit warm on the inside. Yes, this kid had a bright future ahead of him, he just needed some help. And Tony would happily provide it. After all, who didn’t need a bit of support sometimes, right? And he really liked the kid. Who knew, maybe the way they ran into each other could lead to something good in the end.

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